

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4382
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 2404

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PORS, ELAB, ES, SP, PN
SUBJECT: GOES FOLLOWS CAMPESINO CLUES TO SQUATTER PLAN INSTIGATORS

REF: DAO IR 68290042 OF MAY 17

SUMMARY. IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF MAY 19 GOVERNMENT
SOLDIERS, ACTING ON CAMPESINO INFORMATION, CONDUCTED A
HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCH OF THE SMALL SALVADORAN TOWN OF
AGUILARES SEEKING SUBVERSIVE TIES TO THE CAMPESINOS'
TAKEOVER OF A NEARBY HACIENDA. THE GOVERNMENT REPORTED THAT THE
TROOPS RECEIVED FIRE FROM ONE OF THE HOUSES; THE
ENSUING EXCHANGE LEFT SIX CIVILIANS AND ONE SOLDIER DEAD,
AND SEVERAL PRISONERS WERE TAKEN, AMONG THEM THREE WOMEN
WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON THE SCENE, AND THREE FOREIGN
JESUIT PRIESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE MAY 17 THE GOES HAS BEEN GINGERLY DISLODGING
SQUATTING UNION DE TRABAJADORES CAMPESINOS (UTC) AND
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FEDERACION DE CAMPESINOS CHRISTIANOS SALVADORENOS
(FECCAS) CAMPESINOS FROM THE PRIVATELY-OWNED
HACIENDA SAN FRANCISCO, SOME 35 KM. NORTH OF THE
CAPITAL CITY. INFORMATION GLEANED FROM SOME OF THE
CAMPESINOS, EACH OF WHOM WAS INTERROGATED BEFORE BEING
ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE TROOP-RINGED FARM, LED THE SOLIDERIS
TO AN EARLY MORNING SEARCH OF THE NEARBY TOWN OF

AGUILARES. WHEN, PER GOVERNMENT SOURCES, ONE OF THE HOUSES OPENED FIRE AT THE TROOPS, A GUN BATTLE ENSUED, LEAVING SIX CIVILIANS AND ONE SOLDIER DEAD, WITH ONE SOLDIER BADLY WOUNDED. THE THREE CIVILIANS THAT ARE SO FAR IDENTIFIED ARE SAID TO BE FRENTE POPULAR DE LIBERACION (FPL) MAMBERS. AMONG THOSE TAKEN PRISONERS WERE THREE WOMEN WHO HAD BEEN ON THE SCENE, AND THREE JESUIT PRIESTS, WHO ARE THREATENED WITH IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THE COUNTRY "FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY", PER ONE GOES SOURCE. OFFICIALS CLAIM TO HAVE FOUND SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE AS WELL AS A "GREAT QUANTITY" OF AMMUNITION, ARMAMENT, HOMEMADE BOMBS, WIGS AND MASKS IN THE AGUILARZR HOUSE.

2. THE THREE PRIESTS WERE ROUNDED UP AWAY FROM THE SHOOTING SCENE, ON THE INFORMATION OF SOME OF THEIR NEIGHBORS THAT THEY HAD INSTIGATED THE CAMPESINO TAKEOVER OF THE HACIENDA SAN FRANCISCO. TWO OF THE JESUITS ARE FROM SPAIN; ANDRES SALVADOR CARRANZA ONA AND JOSE LUIS ORTEGA SERRANO, WHILE THE THIRD IS A PANAMANIAN; MARCELINO PEREZ HERNANDEZ. ALTHOUGH PRESS REPORTS QUOTE THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR AS SAYING THE PRIESTS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES FOR "VARIOUS YEARS", AND ALL HAVE UTC AND FECCAS TIES, COMPLETE EVIDENCE AGAINST THE PRIESTS IS NOT YET KNOWN. IMMIGRATION DIRGEN TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT THE PRIESTS HAD LED POLITICALLY-ORIENTED MASSES FOR THE SQUATTERS. INFORMANTS HAVE ALSO LINKED SALVADORAN FATHER JOSE INOCENCIA ALAS' NAME TO THE AGUILARES INCIDENT.

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3. COMMENT. WHAT STARTED AS A CAREFULLY RUN GOES REMOVAL OF SQUATTER CAMPESINOS ON MAY 17 BECAME ANOTHER INCIDENT OF A SOLDIER-CIVILIAN CLASH ON MAY 19 WHEN TROOPS CONDUCTED THEIR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCH IN AGUILARES, AND WERE MET WITH OPPOSITION. THE SOLDIERS DID UNCOVER A SUBVERSIVE CELL, BUT WHETHER IT IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE CAMPESINOS' HACIENDA TAKEOVER OR OTHER RECENT PAST HAPPENINGS IS NOT YET KNOWN. THE PENDING EXPULSION OF THE THREE JESUIT PRIESTS FROM EL SALVADOR, AND THE ACCUSATORY FINGER POINTED ONCE AGAIN AT PADRE ALAS WILL FURTHER SERVE TO DIVIDE THE CHURCH FROM THE STATE.

END COMMENT.

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